

DURABLE AESTHETICALLY PLEASING GARMENT PROTECTOR

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 1. Field of Invention

The present invention relates to an improved bib, and more particularly to an improved aesthetically pleasing bib worn by adults. Specifically, the present invention relates to a bib formed from a durable material designed to resemble a normal shirt or other article of clothing which disguises its use.

2. Prior Art

Many adults must wear bibs when eating to protect their clothing from spilled food. These individuals typically include the elderly and other infirm individuals with poor motor coordination who easily spill their food and drink. While bibs can protect the wearer's clothes they have several drawbacks. The most notable drawback for adult wearer's is the embarrassment and humiliation many adults suffer when forced to wear a bib. Since bibs are also worn by babies and small children, adults who are forced to wear bibs may lose their dignity.

Additionally, many bibs do not adequately protect the wearer's clothing. Most prior art bibs only cover the wearer's

front torso leaving their shoulders and upper back completely exposed to food spills.

For example, U.S. Pending Patent application 2002/0069449 published on June 13, 2002 to Pinckney et al. discloses a bib that is highly visible to others. It is easily apparent that one is wearing a bib since it bears no resemblance to normal clothing what-so-ever. This bib even includes a cloth member which is awkwardly attached to the front of the bib and is designed to be used to "clean up" the wearer after meals.

Additionally, U.S. Patent No. 5,031,241 to Widemann discloses a bib that includes a clear plastic sheet with a rigid lip member along the bottom edge to catch loose food items that may fall during eating. While the use of this bib is more discrete than the bib disclosed by Pickney due to its transparent nature it still suffers from drawbacks. Since this bib must be attached to the wearer by use of adhesive regions located along the bib it would appear to be difficult to take on and off. It would especially be difficult if not impossible for the elderly and other infirm adults who already suffer from a lack of motor control to attach this bib to their clothing by use of the adhesive regions. Also, this bib does not cover the

wearer's shoulders and upper back leaving these areas vulnerable to spills.

Therefore, there appears a need in the art for a bib that
5 would be easy to put on and remove that would preserve the adult
wearer's dignity by simulating the appearance of a normal piece
of clothing while covering their entire front torso, shoulders
and upper back while also covering a substantial portion of the
wearer's lap.

OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

Accordingly, the primary object of the present invention is to provide an aesthetically pleasing bib which is easy to take on and off while covering the wearer's front torso, shoulders, 5 lap, and upper back.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a bib that resembles normal clothing as to minimize its true function.

10 A further object of the present invention is to provide a bib that is easy for an elderly wearer to put on and take off.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a bib that when worn covers both the wearer's front torso, 15 shoulders, lap, and upper back.

These and other objects of the present invention are realized in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, described by way of example, and not by way of limitation, which 20 provides for a bib constructed from a durable material that drapes over the wearer's shoulders and completely covers their front torso, shoulder, and upper back while having a decorative indicia and design to simulate the likeness of an actual shirt or blouse.

In brief summary, the present invention overcomes and substantially alleviates the deficiencies of the prior art by providing a bib that resembles normal clothing as to disguise its use when worn. The present invention features a bib large enough to cover the wearer's front torso and drape over their shoulders. Additionally, the bib is large enough to cover the wearer's lap when they are sitting down. In the preferred embodiment of the invention a series of pocket members are affixed to the bottom edge to catch loose food items which fall during eating. A decorative collar is attached along the top edge which surrounds the wearer's neck to give this bib the appearance of a normal shirt which further disguises its use.

The present invention also includes decorative indicia that allow the bib to resemble normal clothing. In one embodiment a collar and buttons are attached to the bib giving it the resemblance of a man's dress shirt. In another embodiment, a different style of collar is attached and the buttons removed to allow the bib to feature the likeness of a woman's blouse.

This new bib is beneficial as it both protects the wearer's clothing and is not noticeable when worn. Therefore, adults who must wear bibs while eating do not have to suffer the

embarrassment of doing so as this bib is effectively disguised by the decoration. Adult wearer's of this bib are afforded greater dignity and their clothes are better protected from spills that occur while eating than they were with prior art
5 bibs.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a front view depicting one embodiment of the improved bib according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a front view depicting another embodiment of the
5 improved bib according to the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a rear view of the improved bib according to the
present invention;

FIG. 4 is a side view depicting one embodiment of the improved
bib according to the present invention; and

10 FIG. 5 is a side view depicting another embodiment of the
improved bib according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to the drawings, the preferred embodiment of the improved bib of the present invention is illustrated and generally indicated as 10 in FIGS. 1-5.

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Referring to FIGS. 1-5, bib 10 is an aesthetically pleasing garment protector that protects and preserves the wearer's clothing from food and drink spills. In the preferred embodiment, bib 10 will be manufactured from a durable cloth material that is capable of being frequently washed and reused. However, any suitable material such as non-woven fabrics can be used and still fall within the scope of the present invention. Bib 10 is designed to look almost identical to normal clothing due to decorative indicia placed on it to disguise its use and true function. Since bib 10 does not appear to be a bib because it resembles normal clothing, wearers of the bib are afforded greater dignity while having their clothing protected. The present invention can be practiced in any number of embodiments, two of which will be described in detail.

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FIGS. 1 and 4 depict one of the preferred embodiments of bib 10. In this embodiment, bib 10 is designed to resemble a man's dress shirt and thus it would be anticipated that men would use this embodiment of the bib. FIGS. 2,3, and 5 depict

another alternative embodiment of bib 10 which is designed to resemble a woman's blouse and would generally be worn by women.

Both of these preferred embodiments of bib 10 include a front member 12 that covers the wearer's front torso and a shoulder cover 14 which drapes over the wearer's shoulders and upper back. Additionally, front member 12 covers a substantial portion of the wearer's lap when they are seated. The portion of shoulder cover 14 that covers the wearer's upper back is further divided into two sides, side 15A and side 15B. Side 15A covers the left side of the wearer's upper back while side 15B covers the right side of the wearer's upper back. Therefore, bib 10 protects most of the wearer's lap from spills when they are seated and also completely protects their front torso, shoulders, and upper back from spills that occur during eating.

Other features common to both embodiments of bib 10 include an attachment member 16 which secures bib 10 to the wearer and a pocket 18 located along the bottom edge of front member 12 to catch loose food items. Both attachment member 16 and pocket 18 allow bib 10 to provide superior protection to the wearer's clothes from food and drink spills.

Specifically, as can be seen in FIG. 3 attachment member 16 securely attaches bib 10 to the wearer and allows the bib to be easily taken on and off by the elderly and other adults with poor muscle coordination. Attachment member 16 is vertically located along an outer edge of shoulder cover 14 and attaches sides 15A to side 15B together thus securing bib 10 to the wearer. The use of attachment member 16 allows the wearer to easily put bib 10 on prior to a meal and take it off after a meal. While any attachment means can be used to secure bib 10 to the wearer it is anticipated that in these preferred embodiments that a hook and loop style fastener will be used such as Velcro®. When Velcro® is used as attachment member 16 one piece of Velcro® with the loop portion would be placed on side 15A while the other piece of Velcro® with the hook portion would be placed on side 15B by way of example.

After the bib 10 has been attached to the wearer by attachment member 16 it now protects their clothing from food spills. Not only is the wearer's front torso protected, shoulder cover 14 and sides 15A and 15B afford protection to their shoulders and upper back. Should any loose food items fall while the wearer is eating, pocket 18 would catch them. Pocket 18 is placed along the bottom edge of front member 12 and is preferably constructed from the same cloth like material as

front member 12. A series of stitches 20 attaches pocket 18 to front member 12. Any number of pockets can be used but it in this preferred embodiment, 2 pockets are placed along the bottom edge of front member 12.

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Pocket 18 may also include decorative indicia to further disguise its use as a bib. Decorative indicia are articles or elements that when applied or affixed to bib 10 allow it to resemble a normal article of clothing such as a man's shirt or 10 woman's blouse. Depending upon which embodiment is used, bib 10 will either appear to look identical to a man's shirt or a woman's blouse. The decorative indicia used should correspond to the particular embodiment being practiced. For example, to allow bib 10 to resemble a man's shirt, decorative indicia such 15 as a breast pocket 22 and a plurality of buttons 24 would be placed along the center portion of front member 12 thereby giving bib 10 the appearance of a man's button down shirt. Buttons 24 can be attached directly to front member 12, however in the preferred embodiment, buttons 24 are placed on an 20 additional piece of vertical fabric 26 that is secured to front member 12 by additional stitching 20. This additional vertical piece of fabric is attached to front member 12 as this design element is generally used in the conventional manufacture of men's shirts.

The last decorative indicia placed on this embodiment for men is collar 28. Collar 28 is designed to resemble the appearance of the type of collar found on normal men's dress shirts. 5 Collar 28 not only performs a decorative function as it allows bib 10 to closely resemble a normal dress shirt, it also aids in protecting the wearer's neck from food spills.

FIGS. 2 and 5 illustrate and describe another embodiment 10 suitable for women. The only difference between the two embodiments described herein is the type of decorative indicia used. For the embodiment for women, indicia should be utilized to allow bib 10 to resemble the appearance of a woman's blouse. As shown in FIG. 2, collar 30 is placed on front member 12 to 15 allow bib 10 to resemble a woman's blouse. Collar 30 is different in design than collar 28 because it is known in the clothing field that collar's on woman's blouses differ in appearance from collars on men's shirts.

20 The type and amount of decorative indicia that can be used in the present invention is endless. Any type of decorative indicia to allow bib 10 to resemble a normal article of clothing could be used and still fall within the scope of the present invention. Examples not shown would include designs of several

colors for both men and women (not shown) to create additional embodiments for men, women, or a unisex embodiment.

Additional decorative indicia may include college logos
5 (not shown) or various sports logos (not shown) that could be used with different collar designs to allow bib 10 to resemble a casual sweatshirt. For men, an embodiment could exist whereby bib 10 resembled a man's suit for example (not shown) or a woman's dress (not shown) for a woman. It is also anticipated
10 that bib 10 could be custom designed to match a wearer's clothing. For example, if the wearer was wearing a navy blue button down shirt with white buttons they could select and order a bib 10 that was navy blue with white decorative buttons 24 that were an exact replica of the type present on their blue
15 shirt. This use of the present invention would allow the bib to be almost invisible except to the most careful of observers.

Thus, improved bib 10 of the present invention allows adults that wear the bib to both protect their clothing and to
20 disguise to others their need for a bib. Since it is not readily apparent to others that the wearer must wear a bib they will experience a greater sense of personal dignity.

It should be understood from the foregoing that, while particular embodiments of the invention have been illustrated and described, various modifications can be made thereto without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

- 5 Therefore, it is not intended that the invention be limited by the specification; instead, the scope of the present invention is intended to be limited only by the appended claims.